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SUBJECT: AGOA FORUM UPDATE: PROGRESS ON CO-CHAIRS AND
REGISTRATION/BADGING

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12. Summary: During the April 23 AGOA Forum Main
Preparatory Committee, the Government of Kenya (GOK)
presented a revised program - provided by the Kenyan
embassy in Washington - with changes to breakout session
co-chairs. The GOK, along with other AGOA-eligible
countries, has agreed to all USG-proposed African co-
chairs. On the final day of the program, the GOK
combined the ministerial closing and lunch. The
Conferencing Sub-committee presented a written
registration manual with detailed information about the
badging system. Econoff said the interagency team does
not support an exhibition open to the general public.
RSO - during a separate badging meeting - discouraged
public access to the trade exhibition and emphasized the
importance of properly vetting all registrants,
particularly those who are not invited participants.
Members of the Kenyan security entities also cautioned
against opening the exhibition to the public. End
summary.

The GOK Accepts Co-chairs

13. During the April 23 AGOA Forum Main Preparatory Committee, Lina Ochieng, Chair of the Technical Sub-committee presented a revised program. The GOK, along with other AGOA-eligible countries, has agreed to all USG-proposed African co-chairs. The program - provided by the Kenyan embassy in Washington following meetings with US officials - includes three modifications to African breakout session co-chairs: Kenya now co-chairs the Good Governance and Enabling Environment session, Mozambique is the lead for the Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) session, and Malawi is tasked to co-chair the Health session. On the margins of the full committee meeting, the Chair agreed to consider amending the title of the governance session to include a reference to corruption. The GOK is working with AGOA-eligible embassies in Washington to identify speakers for the breakout sessions. On the final day of the program, the GOK combined the ministerial closing and lunch into one session from 12:30 - 14:00. Econoff stated the USG will identify a US co-lead for the ministerial closing.

Registration, Badging, and Public Access

14. The Conferencing Sub-committee presented a written registration manual. The manual provides details of the online registration system and additional information about the badging system. The badges will now include bar codes, in addition to pictures and color-coding, that link individual participants to their registration information. The GOK plans to scan bar codes at every screening area, including at the entrance to forum sessions, to control registrants' access to the various events of the forum. On the margins of the larger meeting, the Chair of the Conferencing Sub-committee said the USG will be able to send photos of its delegation electronically and collect badges ahead of the forum in order to minimize wait time for the US delegation.

15. At a separate April 28 Badging Sub-committee meeting, Xerox presented further details of the online registration system. The online system is ready to go live once the registration forms are approved by the GOK, private sector, and civil society representatives. The system allows for both online and faxed/mailed registration and protects data availability and integrity through encryption and other security mechanisms. The system is open to both invited guests and the members of the public to register for the forum events. Invited participants will be issued a unique identifier to input during the registration process. Those who initiate registration without an invitation will be required to receive approval from the system before they are allowed to complete their registration. RSO emphasized the importance of properly vetting all registrants, particularly those who are not invited participants. RSO is concerned that the proposed registration website is going to be easily accessible through the World Wide Web. RSO stressed that if the GOK plans to move forward this way, then it must ensure robust vetting procedures are in place. To that end, the GOK plans to form a committee of government, security, private sector and civil society representatives to evaluate those who register without invitations before approving their registration. The Chair of the Conferencing Sub-committee requested Xerox to provide a more comprehensive plan for registration and badging from start to finish.

16. Businesses within the complex will remain open during the forum events. The GOK will provide special badges to proprietors and their visiting clients will be screened,

badged, and escorted while they are conducting business in the Kenya International Conference Center (KICC). The GOK is also considering whether to allow public access to the trade show during the forum events. The GOK remains confident that it can maintain control of public access to the trade show but is open to our suggestion that it be restricted to registered participants during the actual forum events and open to the public during days when the forum is not in session. At the April 28 badging meeting, RSO discouraged public access to the trade exhibition; members of the Kenyan security apparatus also cautioned against opening the exhibition to the public.

Private Sector Progress

¶7. The Private Sector Sub-committee reported that it is identifying speakers for its program in collaboration with the Corporate Council on Africa and the USAID Regional Trade and Competitiveness Hubs. The Private Sector Sub-committee confirmed that it has agreed not to add the Public-Private Partnership session to its program. Preparation for the trade exhibition continues with 108 booths sold, and exhibition organizers are working through the regional trade hubs to mobilize more participation from AGOA-eligible countries. The Sub-committee said the purpose of the exhibition is to provide an opportunity for medium and large companies to showcase products for export to the US and other African countries. However, in an area separate from the main exhibition, there will be a smaller show for small businesses selling local crafts.

GOK Progress

¶8. The Full Committee is waiting for approval of a draft invitation by Minister of Trade Amos Kimunya. The Chair of the Technical Sub-committee said April 28 that ministry officials expect his approval this week, and the GOK will send the invitations to AGOA-eligible countries in early May. Econoff again requested possible dates from the GOK for a joint press conference involving Trade Minister Kimunya and Ambassador Ranneberger announcing the forum. Unexpectedly, a senior Ministry of Trade official announced that East African Trade Ministers - during a recent meeting in Kampala - decided to hold an EAC investment conference in Nairobi the same week as the AGOA Forum. The five heads of state of the EAC countries would attend the conference. The idea was not well received by the Chair of the committee, who said he would discuss the security and logistics implications with Minister Kimunya. (Comment: We are seeking further clarification on what exactly was decided by the trade ministers and will do our best to de-conflict the events; we would welcome the Department doing the same in Washington. End comment.)

Ranneberger